

Couch, Genero Hernandez, Randy Couch, Daniel Barrett, Abraham Ahumada, Branch Vancourt, C.J. Finke, Dean King, Dean Charriez, Jesstin Fox, and Ryan Soto.

I congratulate the Richland Springs Coyotes on their national and State championships and wish them the best of luck next season.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION SPEECH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, this evening the President, in bowing to the electoral reality of last November and, with finally some recognition of real problems confronting our Nation and our citizens, is about to begin, in his State of the Union, to address the issue of the need for an expansion of health insurance. Forty-six million Americans lack health insurance, 1 million more per year every year this President has been in office. He will also address the issues of energy efficiency, energy independence, and global warming; and we welcome some remarks from the President in those areas. And he is going to address the debt and the deficit.

We welcome this new focus on these extraordinarily important and difficult issues that have been pretty much ignored during his Presidency. Unfortunately, his rhetorical U-turn is not going to be matched by the reality of his proposals. In order to provide health insurance to 46.1 million people who don't have it, he says we should tax people who do have health insurance.

Now, that is interesting because the President, of course, gets his health insurance for free. And his proposal would also extend tax benefits to the wealthiest among us because many people who don't have health insurance can't benefit from tax breaks. They don't pay Federal income taxes.

That is not a real solution. A real solution would be to take on the anti-trust immunity of the insurance industry, estimated to raise \$45 billion, saving consumers that money. That is the cost of uninsured health care in America.

Energy efficiency and independence, well, we will wait and hear what the President has to say. But remember a year ago, he talked about our addiction to oil, and all his policies have been designed to further that addiction thus far.

On the debt and the deficit, he still wants to cut taxes for the wealthiest

among us. He wants to extend, to make permanent, all of his tax cuts; exempt all estates from taxes; and says he is going to balance the budget. Well, if he was really going to do that by the year 2012, he would have to eliminate the Federal Government except for the Department of Defense, a little bit of the Department of Homeland Security, because the projected deficit is as large as about the rest of the discretionary budget if his tax cuts are maintained. You have to begin to raise revenues from the wealthiest among us to address this gaping maw hole, the deficit.

And then there is one very important problem where he isn't even pretending to change direction, one where a majority of the American people and a majority of the United States disagree with the President's nostrum, and that is his desire to escalate the war in Iraq as a way out. Defying his own Joint Chiefs of Staff and the senior officers and advisers in the military; defying the Prime Minister of Iraq, who said we shouldn't put more Americans into Baghdad; defying the American people; and defying this Congress, the President is going to offer us more stay the course in Iraq and try to spin it into a new policy that will lead to success.

We want to succeed, but to succeed, the Iraqi Government has to be willing to take on some of its own problems. The Shiias and the Sunnis have got to stop slaughtering each other trying to settle a 1,400-year-old grudge and putting us in the middle of their civil war. They have got to begin to meaningfully share power, and they have got to begin to resolve their own issues. And the U.S. sending more troops is not going to lead them down that path.

So I fear that what the President is proposing there will lead to more conflict. It may look good in the short term, but long term it is not going to resolve this very difficult issue.

I hope that the President offers us some real changes in direction tonight and not just a rhetorical U-turn to bow to the reality of the elections.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WE NEED A NEW DIRECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, a State of the Union Address is an opportunity for the Nation to take stock of where it is at this exact moment.

It is obvious that the entire domestic agenda has been swallowed up by the war in Iraq. With over 3,000 U.S. soldiers killed in action; with over 650,000 innocent Iraqi civilians dead in the

war; with this Nation's having spent over \$400 billion in the war and, according to Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, will spend up to \$2 trillion for the war in Iraq, we have seen the hopes and the aspirations of the American people for more jobs, for better housing, for decent health care, for education for their children just swept aside as the administration focuses intently not only on the war, but escalating the war.

I think all across this country people are hopeful that America will have a new agenda, one which will recognize that we must focus on America's basic needs. It is time for America to come home. Come home and start taking care of the needs of our people here for decent housing, the needs of our people for health care. Over 100 million Americans either have no health insurance or lack access to adequate health insurance, and yet we are about destroying the health of the people of Iraq instead of focusing on the needs of our people here back home.

Martin Luther King said it years ago in his speech at Riverside Church in New York. He said that the hopes and the aspirations of people of two countries were being set aside. He was speaking of Vietnam and the United States. Today the hopes and the aspirations of people of two countries, of Iraq and the United States, are being set aside in this head-long rush to escalation of a war.

Now, what should be our policies, and what steps should we take? First of all, this isn't just about opposing escalation. I would say that is pretty easy to do based on the record of this administration's conduct of the war. But we should be taking a strong stand against the occupation. We should be demanding that the United States end the occupation, that we bring our troops home, that we close our bases. That then will set the precondition that is necessary for the world community to come together and support a peacekeeping and security mission in Iraq. That then sets the stage for the Iraqi people to reach a moment of possibility for reconciliation between the Shiites, the Kurds, and the Sunnis. It is absolutely imperative that the United States announce that it is going to end the occupation because it is the occupation which is fueling the insurgency.

Tonight the Nation is waiting for a new direction. It is not looking for more war. It is not looking for more casualties. It is not looking for a continued destruction of our domestic agenda. So we are here to state that there is a plan, and I have submitted it.

The Kucinich 12-point plan is the plan that sets the stage for America to take a new direction. That direction is out of Iraq, but it is also a direction of reconciling with the world community because the way this administration responded to 9/11 separated us from the world community. At a moment when the whole world was ready to embrace the United States in its suffering and